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Dale T. Lindgren

University of Nebraska - Lincoln, dlindgren1@unl.edu

Roger Uhlinger

University of Nebraska West Central Research and Extension Center

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'Prairie Pink' *Dianthus*

Dale T. Lindgren¹ and Roger Uhlinger²

University of Nebraska West Central Research and Extension Center/
Horticulture, Route 4, Box 46A, North Platte, NE 69101

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'Prairie Pink' (*Dianthus caryophyllus* L.) was released by the Univ. of Nebraska–Lincoln for its winter hardiness, compact growth, attractive pink double flowers, and repeat blooming. Its primary use is as a perennial border plant, but it also can be used as a cut flower. The name 'Prairie Pink' has been registered with the International Dianthus Registration Authority for cultivar names (A.C. Leslie, The Royal Horticultural Society, Wisley GU23 6QB, England).

Origin

'Prairie Pink' dianthus, tested as NP76116, was initially field-planted as a seedling in 1976 and was selected in 1977 at the Univ. of Nebraska West Central Research and Extension Center, North Platte. The parentage of this selection originated from plant material obtained from the Cheyenne Horticulture Field

Station and brought to North Platte in 1970. The original plant material brought to North Platte was reported to be advanced-generation offspring of *Dianthus plumarius* L. x 'Chabaud' carnation. The exact pedigree (female and male parent) of 'Prairie Pink' is unknown. The chromosome number is not available. Several previous *Dianthus* selections have been released from this project (Lindgren and Uhlinger, 1981; Uhlinger and Lindgren, 1984).

Description

'Prairie Pink' *Dianthus* averages 39.3 ± 7.2 cm in height, 12 ± 9.4 stalks per plant, 4.6 ± 0.6 cm in flower diameter, 29 ± 4.0 petals per bloom, and 30 ± 22.7 buds per plant in North Platte (Table 1). Plants bloom for 2 to 4 weeks beginning in early June and reflower in late summer. They will flower sporadically from

June to late summer. Plants normally live an average of 3 to 4 years and have been hardy to the southern edge of zone 4 of the *USDA Plant Hardiness Map* (U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, 1960); however, no research has been conducted specifically on cold hardiness. 'Prairie Pink' has a nonsplitting calyx. Foliage color is blue-green. Since its selection in 1977 in North Platte, 'Prairie Pink' has had no major insect pests. Diseases were minimal the first year of planting, but some leaf spots (*Alternaria dianthi* Stev.) were present on older plants (2 to 4 years old); however, no specific disease susceptibility studies were conducted on this selection. The plant does best in full sun and in soil with good drainage. It has not been tested outside of the midwestern United States, so its adaptability in other geographic regions is unknown.

Availability

'Prairie Pink' is vegetatively propagated from stem cuttings. Plants from seed do not breed true. Plant material is available for sale from Bluebird Nursery, P.O. Box 460, Clarkson, NE 68629. This selection is not patented. Inquiries concerning availability for research purposes should be addressed to D.T.L., Univ. of Nebraska West Central Research and Extension Center, Rt. 4, Box 46A, North Platte, NE 69101.

Literature Cited

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¹Professor.

²Deceased.

Table 1. Characteristics of 'Prairie Pink' *Dianthus* at North Platte, Neb., in 1992.

Trait	No.	
	observations	$\bar{X} \pm SE$
Height (cm)	29	39.3 ± 7.2
Stalks/plant	48	11.8 ± 9.4
Bloom diameter (cm)	10	4.6 ± 0.6
Petals/bloom	29	29.1 ± 4.0
Buds/plant	41	30.2 ± 22.7